

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Inviting People to the church

### Inviting People to the church - posted by Austin (), on: 2005/5/25 5:30

This is something i have been pondering on lately and was just wondering others opinions.

My mate told me that the common belief of the congregation in the past was that it was there responsibility to pay the pastor. who would in turn reach the lost. I found this hard to believe how people honestly believe that they had no obligation to reach the lost.

After i thought about this for a while it came to me that it isn't so diffren't today. Only we (the congregation) believe it is our responsibility to invite our friends to the church. But that is where our responsibility stops. Once they are in the church it is the common belief that it is now the pastor's (or other leader's) job to convert them.

Non-Christians find church boring and irrelevant of at best wierd and uncomfortable. So they should they have no concept of God (1 Corinthians 1:18), so going to church would be like watching a football game where the ball to you was invisible.

I ran this idea past a mate and he said he disagreed as if non-christian didn't come to church how else would they hear about the gospel. which hit my underlying point on the head (it is each persons individual responsibility to spread the gospel). The church is a body of believers (although i have been refering to it as a sunday service) so natrally non-believers do not belong in a church and often when they go to churchs they are offended as they will not understand the concept of us being broken and will see in their eyes hypocrites.

However if the non-believer is first converted and then introduced into the church they will be very thankfull for a family of believers and it will benifite both parties.

I would appreciate feed back on this concept i know that if in a church a non-believer is more likely to experience and see god. But god should be evident enough in our own lives anyway for the non-believer to grasp a concept of christ.

### Re: Inviting People to the church, on: 2005/5/25 6:33

Quote:

-----However if the non-believer is first converted and then introduced into the church they will be very thankfull for a family of believers and it will benifite both parties.  
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This is very true and takes a great deal of pressure off Christians to manipulate their non-Christian friends through the church doors, where there is no place for debate or questions (usually) and the message is not honed to their personal needs, by the Spirit's leading (and sometimes, pure common sense on the part of the believer). The person can be introduced to prayer and start reading the Bible long before they go to church, too, even if they have not made a personal commitment to Christ. This is how Brother Andrew, in God's Smuggler, came to the Lord - just laying down reading the Bible every day for two years, then deciding in a clear-headed way, to give his life to Jesus.

Sometimes, people with a church background from childhood *want* to go to church but then they come under pressure to turn up every week and they may not be ready to give that amount of time and performance to the task, whereas they are, deep down, interested in drawing closer to God. We need to be sensitive to the heart of the matter and give our full attention to the Lord's leading in each individual's situation. And *love* them.

**Re: the risk of inviting people to church - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/5/25 7:09**

I think sometimes our zeal to invite people to church just so that they can "find God" is based on illusions about ourselves as "the church". If we would ask all those who have left the church or refuse any church involvement we would hear almost the same words almost all the time - words about the hypocrisy, conflict, empty ritual etc.

Yes, the church can do more harm than good for the unsaved - especially if we try to change people without trusting the Spirit to do it.

A teen once said to me once, "You church people think that everyone who is outside the church is stupid. You think they don't understand anything, so you talk down to them." I think he is really sensing some pride that he has experienced in the church, and is making a generalization.

There is another danger that I see in inviting people to church: It can promote religious conformity, and cause people to think they are saved when they are not.

The best way to invite people to God is to invite God into our own lives - and thus people will see God through us - God's living temple.

Thank you for sharing the comment about Brother Andrew. That is a true work of the Holy Spirit, which reminds me of the apostle Paul. God called him AWAY from the existing religious establishment in order to teach him directly. Imagine if his thinking had been infected by the teachings of the day. He would have contaminated scripture.

Why not just let the Spirit prompt us and others.  
Diane

**Re: Inviting People to the church - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/5/25 7:36**

Austin

I think this thread links with others on 'what is a church?' etc. There are two broad 'models' for 'Christian' gatherings in the NT. The Corinthian model is a meeting where the saints have gathered to be available to God. There seems to be very little structure in this kind of meeting, but Paul does see the prospect of a 'stranger' being present in the meeting. "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." (1Cor. 14:23-25,) The other 'model' is the 'outreach' pattern... "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

(Acts 19:9-10) These were 'daily' meetings where Paul 'dialogued' (the KJV gives a much more contentious feel) with all who would listen and discuss.

When I say 'model' I don't mean a blueprint but just drawing attention to the fact that there are different 'kinds' of meetings recorded in the NT. Personally I am in favour of the 'wide open to God' meeting for the saints and a more structured meeting for 'dialogue'. I think it is a kindness to 'the stranger' to put a little bit of structure around the 'dialogue' meeting. English adults now only engage in communal singing when they are drunk. Marriages and funerals often show the 'stranger' acutely embarrassed at the attempt to stand and 'sing' from a book containing words which he does not believe and often does not understand.

The 'models' for evangelism in the NT are also very varied. The Athen's street market is the one we are most familiar with, but Paul 'evangelised' in synagogues, at riverside 'interdenominational' prayer meetings, and in ordinary conversation. The Greek word 'laleo' meaning to speak was sometimes used in a slightly derogatory manner to mean 'chatter' or just simply 'talk'. The word is frequently used in the NT as part of the process of 'evangelisation', as one put it 'they were gossiping the gospel'.

**Re:, on: 2005/5/29 9:31**

I wish I could find a church I'd be excited about invitint others too!

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/5/29 14:43**

Quote:

-----I wish I could find a church I'd be excited about inviting others too

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Me too, Lahry! I have a plan: Since our wishes might never come true, let's throw out our wish list and make a new one. Why not wish that others will find Christ through whatever it takes?

Maybe God wishes to draw them to him, and mature them in other ways - maybe through loneliness, neediness, or the troubles in life. Maybe his Spirit will bring just the right person to the one who is truly searching (like Philip came to the Eunuch)

And, then again, maybe God can use our flawed churches anyway. I think he's been doing that a lot.  
Diane

**Re: Inviting People to the church, on: 2005/6/3 16:16**

Austin,

I was wondering what you make of the answers you've received from your questions here?

Quote:

-----I found this hard to believe how people honestly believe that they had no obligation to reach the lost.

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Here I believe you are right on the nail, and if you feel a burden for bringing the lost to the Lord, you should proceed with your calling! Often those in the preacher's seat in churches, may be better at pastoring or teaching, than evangelising. I know, it's not ideal. But I want to encourage you, while you are keen, as it is always good to obey the Lord's leading. It is as you put one foot in front of the other, He will be able to move you into a more specific understanding of His purposes for you.

Churches are made up of people, some of whom will never lead the whole congregation for anything, depending on the opportunities which membership of their church provides. Not all are called to lead the flock, although I believe that every single believer has ministries which they should be encouraged to share with the body of believers. The organic flow of love through God's callings and giftings to individual members, is an important aspect of church life. This is sometimes hidden behind formal titles (depending on the type of worship or denomination) but which should not be snuffed out by the individual believer, even if he or she finds little opportunity to be stretched in the exercise of such gifts. (We are all called to exercise faith.)

Sorry if this is a bit of a ramble. Seek the Lord for direction from Him. This is a safe thing to do.